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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to (1) gain insight into some of the reasons for the attitude of the American Indian parent toward their child's school progress through a review of influential historical factors; (2) determine the degree and the effect of parental interest today; and (3) make recommendations and suggestions for improving parent involvement in the school. The method used included a review of the current available literature. Additional information was obtained through interviews with Education Professions Development Act Indian panel members and parents of school age children on South Dakota reservations. Most teachers felt that Indian homes do little to assist the school in encouraging attendance and attention to schoolwork, and therefore better communication must be established between school and parent. An active advertising campaign to increase parental interest in the Indian schools was needed. The schools needed to become active in all local, county, and state competition in academic and recreational activities. Several recommendations were presented, e. g., changing the teaching methods and classroom setting to accommodate Indian learning styles by teaching Sioux language, nature lore, moral values, and by bringing the Indian point of view into the classroom. (FF)

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A PLAN FOR INDIAN PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH DAKOTA DAY SCHOOLS

A Project Paper Presented to
Mr. John P. Holt of the Graduate Faculty
Northern State College
Aberdeen, South Dakota

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Special Education

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by
Donald C. Peters
May 1970

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Lack of parent interest in the performance of their children has been considered a deterrent to Indian education. These economically depressed and often indifferent parents are generally not acquainted with the educational programs offered. Involvement of these parents could provide school programs better focused on the needs of their children, provide a sense of support for the school, and return to the parents a sense of effectiveness in directing community and personal affairs.

A need exists to initiate parental involvement, expanding their interest to school policy and making decisions concerning innovative programs. Innovations should include curriculum material related to the local community and the Indian way of life. Each teacher in the system should learn about the Indian and his culture.

Indian consultants in the Educational Professions Development Act program have repeatedly stated that effective Indian parent involvement in the school must start from the earliest grades. Whenever a change or new program is planned, this is the time to ask for parent assistance in development of the program. Parental assistance should be sought for any proposed changes or additions to the school program.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to (1) gain insight into some of the reasons for the attitude of the Indian parent toward their child's school progress through a review of historical factors that have influenced their attitude; (2) determine the degree and the effect of parental interest today; (3) make recommendations and suggestions for improvement of parent involvement in the school.

Importance of the study. At present, lack of parental involvement in school affairs looms large as a deterrent in educating Indian students. This study is an attempt to obtain the ideas and attitudes of Indian parents and noted authorities concerning means for improving parental involvement. From this informational base, a proposal for including Indian parents in school operations is generated.

II. METHODS AND PROCEDURES USED

The method used in this study included review of the current literature available on the topic. Additional information was obtained through interviews with Education Professions Development Act Indian panel members and parents of school age children on reservations in South Dakota. Focus of all activities fell on the issues of feasibility and sequence of activities which could result in Indian control of Indian schools.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Assimilation is an attempt to merge the Indian into the dominant cultural patterns.

Bureau of Indian Affairs is a federal agency contained within the Department of the Interior. Among other responsibilities for Indian people, the BIA provides education for Indian children living on reservations.

Curriculum refers to the planned experiences which constitute the program designed to enhance the learning of students. Federal Indian schools attempt to achieve the same basic educational objectives as the South Dakota public schools.

Day Schools are operated by the Bureau in areas where there is much Indian-owned land with no public schools available. Indian children are under responsibility of school personnel only during regular school hours.

Indian parents are American Indian of one-fourth Indian blood or more, living on reservations, who have one or more children enrolled or who express an interest in school affairs.

Innovations refer to changes needed in the school system to improve interest and enhance learning.

Parental attitudes were measured by quality of interaction and from review of the literature.

Parental interest included interaction and suggestions offered during interview.

Reservation refers to an area of land set aside for Indian use. On reservations the government has assumed the responsibility for welfare, health, and education of the Indians.

IV. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to review of the current literature available on the topic. The study included interviews with Indian panel members associated with the Education Professions Development Act and interviews with Indian parents.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INFLUENCE OF THE PAST ON CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES

History of Indian Education.

Review of literature in search of past happenings reveal many incidents that support present feelings of the Indian parent toward school.

After the first white men arrived it suddenly dawned upon the Indian people that little marks on a sheet of paper could have meaning. They could be read and the reading would run consecutively on as if one were actually talking. Learning to write was laberious but fascinating. The most promising and eager men and women came to the school centers.[1]

Letters and papers of school children from 1892 to 1910 indicate happy, eager children, alert to whatever subject was introduced to them. The compositions speak of good times and frequently mention visiting parents in camp.[2]

What a marvelous start, rosy with promise! The Indian child was a sponge for new ideas. One wonders what mistakes have been made since this wonderful start in Indian education. What clashes happened between the two cultures?

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[1]Ella Deloria, Speaking of Indians (New York, New York: Friendship Press, 1944), pp. 110

[2]Ibid., pp. 114

The Choctaw and the Cherokee nations ran their own school systems from about 1800 until after the Civil War--when the government took their authority away and put them on the reservations. In the days when they were running their own schools, the Choctaws and the Cherokees were more literate in their own language than the average American citizen was in English. They were more literate in English than the average citizen was in Arkansas and Texas.

Both of these school systems were closed down by the United States government more than seventy years ago. Since then, federal policies with respect to the education of Indian children have fluctuated greatly, but none of them has been successful by any measure. Today, the Indians in school score lower on most standardized tests and read and write English less well than non-Indian students.[3]

Forty percent of adult Cherokees are functionally illiterate in English. Only thirty-nine percent have completed the eighth grade.

These historical incidents reinforce the value of investing control of the schools to the community. Indian communities are no exception to that value. Such control would produce more sensitivity to needs of the Indian child.

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[3]Helen Rowan, "Give it Back to the Indians," Carnegie Quarterly, pp. 1, Spring 1969.

One theme running through all the Subcommittee on Indian Education's recommendations is increased Indian participation in controlling their own educational programs. The United States can no longer be paternalistic. Whatever develops, plans for Indian education must be Indian plans.[4]

In the early days, Indians of high school age were taken--often almost literally kidnapped--from Western reservations and sent to boarding schools in the East. The idea was to break them completely away from their families and their tribes, forbid any speaking of their native languages or any manifestation of their native culture. In the process, it was thought they would become fully participating members of the dominant society. But the program of de-Indianization did not work. The products of these schools were essentially misfits both in their own tribes and in white society. Those who made the best adjustments were those who returned to their tribes and after a painful process of restoring contacts with their own people and the old way, became leaders among them. Their own culture and language negated, Indian school children made only limited effort to learn the life way of white Americans and the English language. The rather brutal techniques used to sever them from their

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[4]George D. Fischer, A National Disgrace: Indian Education, Today's Education: Journal of the National Education Association: March 1970, pp. 24-27.

backgrounds merely produced negative reactions, a confused notion of white society tinged with considerable bitterness and resentment toward life in general.

After the 1930's, the organized attack on Indian cultures and languages was abandoned, but a half century of cultural disadvantage made an indelible mark on Indian society and personality. Bitterness, feelings of inadequacy, and hostility to schools were passed down to later generations.[5]

Assimilation.

Those who have been involved in the formal education of Indians have assumed that the main purpose of the school was assimilation. The Indian would be better off, it was believed, if he could be induced, or forced, to adopt the habits, skills, knowledge, language, values, religion, attitudes, and customs of the dominant society. Assimilation, to be sure, is a reciprocal process, and in the course of it the non-Indian has learned much from the Indian, so that today American culture is immeasurably enriched by items adopted from the Indian. But it was always the non-Indian's way of life which must set the pattern. Formal education has been regarded as the most effective means for bringing about assimilation.

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[5]Edward Dozier, American-Indian White Relations and The Adjustment Problems of Indian School Children, (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona 1968) pp. 10.

As conflict with the western tribes increased, pressure from both the military and the humanitarians forced the congress in 1867 to pass a bill creating a commission to make peace with the Indians. The members of the commission agreed that assimilation was inevitable; but, immediately within the commission, two schools of thought regarding assimilation began to form. One point of view was represented by General William T. Sherman, who insisted that assimilation would have to come at the point of the bayonet. Indians would not work unless forced he maintained, and it was the military who was prepared to apply the force. Nathaniel G. Taylor, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, represented the humanitarian point of view, and insisted that Christian teachers should be sent among them to prepare them for life in Anglo-Saxon society.

These two approaches--coercion and persuasion--have always represented the two extremes of assimilation policy. Many harsh methods were used to get children into the schools, to discourage the use of their native languages, to impose upon them white values and habits, and to turn them against their Indian ways.[6]

Educators, accordingly, while they invariably have

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[6]Elizabeth Colson, The Makah Indians (Minneapolis Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1953) pp. 118.

been committed to the assimilation of the Indian, have disagreed as to how much coercion should be applied, and as to what degree of assimilation they should seek. For instance, in 1863 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs declared that his policy was "designed to civilize and reclaim the Indians within our borders, and induce them to adopt the customs of civilization"; and one of his successors in office, in 1903, expressed the hope that the Indian might be educated to work, live and act as a reputable, moral citizen, and thus become a self-supporting, useful member of society.[7]

Effect of Violation of Tribal Customs on Attitudes.

Teachers did not understand or appreciate the Indian way of life. Brothers and sisters were made to dance together, although Indian custom required that they politely keep apart. Often a child did not understand the question and his answer was considered wrong without regard to his past experience. Children would have their long hair cut short to the dismay of the parent. Parents soon began to pull their children from schools because of unfair and unjust treatment. Thus began the history of the present attitude of parents toward school.

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[7]Brewton Berry, The Education of the American Indians (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968) pp. 24.

The most vital kinship role in early Dakota society was the provision of affection and guidance by parents to their children. They tried to treat the child as a person of dignity and pride, avoiding physical punishment which might enslave or subjugate the child's spirit. Children were never unnecessarily reproved and if admonishment seemed advisable, it was gentle and reasonable in order not to hurt the child's feelings.[8]

Very often the teachers of the early Indian schools were unaware of this relationship. Parental attitude toward the schools slowly developed as a reaction to the teachers' unconcern for past Indian culture.

Dakota children received an early informal education in all of the things needed to prepare them for their station in life. Thus the Indian parent could see little need for formal education as it is known today.

The role of the young girl in Dakota Indian society emphasized a "self-conscious" attitude of respect for her brother. She learned to accept the fact that boys occupied a superior position in the household; that to trouble or embarrass them would be a serious violation of kinship rules. She was constantly warned not to talk to him directly, or

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[8]Vernon D. Malan, The Dakota Indian Family (Brookings, S. Dakota Bulletin # 470, May 1958) pp. 12.

work at his side.[9] Teachers again unaware would sometimes have brother and sister compete against each other and when the girl would perform better than her brother old kinship rules were broken.

In the past the Bureau of Indian Affairs advocated that all Indians be thrust without delay into the mainstream of American life. The group has succeeded from time to time in securing federal legislation and regulations for opening Indian resources more freely to non-Indians, for banning tribal customs and ceremonials, and for transporting the children to be "civilized" in distant boarding schools where the very use of their language was denied them.[10]

Indian grandparents are often antagonistic to the schools, fearing that their descendants will become un-Indian and unfit for tribal life. The parents themselves tend more to be unfamiliar with the school and its work than overtly hostile. In addition, educated Indians are not fully trusted by their own people, partly because, in the past, education meant enforced acculturation and rejection of Indian values.

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[9]Ibid, pp. 16.

[10]William Brophy, The Indian; America's Unfinished Business, (Norman, Oklahoma; University of Oklahoma Press, 1966) pp. 9.

In addition to these rather general cultural factors, there are others which appear to be in explicit conflict with traditional American teaching methods. Most Indian cultures, for example, exert social control through peer-group shaming. Thus the conventional classroom atmosphere can be painful to a child; he may be made the butt of his playmates' ridicule if he makes a mistake, on the one hand, or gives an overbright response on the other. This is related to another point of culture conflict: Indian children are brought up to disapprove of those who consciously try to get ahead of others to achieve status. Hence a child is likely to choose to maintain acceptance among his group rather than strive to achieve in the classroom sense.

In short, almost every characteristic of the style of the traditional American classroom is antithetical to the learning style of the traditional Indian culture.[11]

A common complaint of teachers of Indian children has always been that the parents are indifferent, apathetic, or uncooperative. The early records refer repeatedly to the frustration experienced by the missionary-teachers, arising from the lack of enthusiasm and encouragement on the part of the Indian parents. The older members of the community, remembering the harsh discipline and intolerance to which

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[11]Helen Rowan, Op. Cit., pp. 3.

they were subjected in boarding schools, do not insist that their children finish school. Many school administrators stated that lack of parental encouragement and supervision were the chief obstacles to the Indian student's academic achievement. The Indian child frequently obtains no positive encouragement from his parents.[12]

Here and there in the literature one finds reports, not simply of apathy and indifference, but of downright hostility, or, at least, suspicion and fear. Many Indians dislike the white man and all his ways to the extent that they inevitably convey to their children negative feelings toward the schools, with the result that they will not try to succeed. Oftentimes Indians who desire to retain their identity and to perpetuate their traditions are perceptive enough to see that the white man's school presents a serious threat. The school confronts many Indian elders with many philosophical problems about the future of their cultural heritage. Interaction with non-Indians may facilitate learning the English language, acquiring skills for competing economically in the labor market, and attaining a middle-class standard of living. However, the elders must face the possibility that their children will not learn their

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[12]Robert Roessel, Handbook for Indian Education, (Los Angeles, California: Amerindian Publishing Company 1966) pp. 21.

mother tongue, the nature lore, the moral values, the ceremonial rites, and the prayers of their people, and to them, these are more important.[13]

THE PRESENT INFLUENCE ON ATTITUDE

School vs. Family Activities.

On the matter of school attendance, Indian parents are somewhat ambivalent. They understand its basic importance but may not place as high a priority on compulsory daily attendance as school people might like. To them, some things might be more important on a given school day. They are also somewhat ambivalent in their perception of other's reactions to extensive education. While they see it as desirable, they are sometimes fearful of being accused of "showing off" if they were to come back to the reservation to help others after getting their educational training. The Indian student knows that he could be in school every day if he wanted to. In other words, it is up to them and they realize it. Some students stated explicitly that their parents aren't much concerned about school attendance.

To put it differently, "the establishment" which runs things in our society has declared that "school is good" and more school is even better. It follows then that regular daily attendance is much better than erratic attendance. But

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[13]Brewton Berry, Op. Cit., pp. 60.

not all people have accepted that belief. Some appear to be saying, "yes, school is good" but other things are good too, and "if a pupil attends most of the time that should be good enough." This helps to explain why some parents see little fault in occasionally keeping the child home to baby-sit or help with household work. For some families, shopping trips "to town" are big occasions, sometimes about the only family activities which are pre-planned, anticipated and enjoyed by the family as a unit. Unfortunately, such trips usually must come on a school day ...but may have higher priority in the minds of parents and child than does a single day's schooling.[14]

Overageness.

A substantial majority of Indian students are behind in grade as measured by age. It seems probable that the overageness of Indian pupils is accounted for not only by late school entrance, but also by the necessity for a beginning year for many of them in which basic social and conversational English skills are taught, and by the fact of irregular attendance. Many Indian mothers do not send their children to school until they are seven, and many children spend four years getting through the first three grades.

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[14]Dean Crawford, Minnesota Chippewa Indians; A Handbook For Teachers (St. Paul, Minnesota: Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory 1967) pp. 55.

[15]Brewton Berry, Op. Cit., pp. 39.

A child's success in school depends in large part upon the help and encouragement he receives from his parents. The relationship between family background and academic achievement is far more decisive than many had suspected. No matter how much may be done in the schools, or how much the educational program may center around the school, a genuine educational program will have to comprise the adults of the community as well as the children. However important may be the contribution of the schools, the atmosphere and condition of the home are, especially in the early years of the child's life, the primary determinant in the development of the child, and, since it is the parents who determine these conditions and create that atmosphere, it is they who are of necessity the most important educational factors in the lives of their children.[16]

Teacher turnover.

The teacher turnover on the reservation is very high. The reasons for the turnover, include isolation, family responsibilities, and poor housing. Many Indians take for granted that the tenure of their assigned stranger will be brief. Even the youngest pupil has already seen a procession of teachers come and go. The turnover problem

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[16]Brewton Berry, Op. Cit., pp. 58

continues to be serious, especially for the more isolated schools.[17] The turnover problem must be corrected before much progress can be made with parent involvement in the schools. It will take more than one year at one location before the teacher can gain the confidence of the parent and enlist his support in the schools.

Teachers need to be aware of the cultural differences which separate them from their Indian pupils. While teachers are aware of such obvious differences as language, dress, and customs, they are not sensitive to the more subtle and intangible differences of values, attitudes, and feelings. It is very possible that some of the antipathy and insensitivity might be mitigated if teachers developed closer contacts with the parents of their pupils and with the Indian community.

Perceived Negative Effects of Education.

Even today a negative attitude is established by the loss of the Indian child to the white man's world. Many Indian parents have seen too many of their young men and women graduate from high school and college and promptly leave the community. The parents are coming to realize that educating their young is a way of losing them. Many Indians have been extremely suspicious of the Anglo aim behind the education program, to make white men of their children.

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[17]Brewton Berry, Op. Cit., pp. 51.

Many Indian families bitterly opposed the schools, which they regarded as symbols of encroachment and one of the many techniques of the white man for doing away with Indian life.

Federal Plans for Involvement.

In every way the Bureau of Indian Affairs wants to bring more parents more closely into educational involvement. Membership on school boards to be sure, but also more school visits by parents and more home visits by teachers will help accomplish this.[18]

The federal government, as never before, is now stressing tribal initiative in seeking solutions to long-standing problems such as poverty and unemployment, sub-standard housing, and lack of educational opportunity. Indian leadership has responded. About a year ago, a National Council on Indian Education was founded, drawing upon the foremost Indian leadership in the country for its membership, to bring the Indian point of view into Indian classrooms.[19]

Education will continue to be the dominant program of the Bureau and all-out efforts to meet the needs will

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[18]Charles, Zellers, Zap, Address given at Northern Arizona University, June 3, 1968, pp. 6.

[19]Robert L. Bennett, Federal Indian Policy: Past, Present, and Future, Address given at University of Utah, June 12, 1968, pp. 6.

continue. An education goal is to start the reservation child at an earlier age in a structured educational process that will provide experiences to enhance his social and psychological readiness for school. Efforts to have Indian parents and Indian community leaders participate more actively in school operations and education programs through public school district boards, advisory boards, education committees and parent-teacher organizations will continue.[20]

Better Communication.

The education of the American Indian has been a hit-and-miss deal. Some Indians, apparently because of superior innate or fortunate circumstances, have been educated in spite of the system. Unfortunately, the majority have fared badly. The involvement of Indian parents will help change the philosophy of Indian education and place education for Indians on a solid foundation which will result in an enriching and rewarding experience for all Indian students.

From the beginning until the present the schools have made virtually no attempt to establish communication with Indian parents and other relatives, let alone to give them any advisory role or adapt curricula and methods to their culture. Worse yet, even some of the newer programs that supposedly required extensive community participation

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[20]Louis Bruce, Newspaper article in the Aberdeen American News, January 20, 1970, pp. 20.

have been planned, funded, staffed, and put into operation with little or no participation on the part of the children's parents.

CHAPTER III

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Participation in School Programs.

If the educational problems of Indian pupils were easy to solve, they would have been resolved long ago. There remains a need to initiate some steps in the right direction. Parental involvement in their local schools is the first and foremost method of improving the education of the Indian child.

To improve education Indian children need to be given first-hand knowledge of many of the institutions and customs of our society. They should have a bridge to take them into the average white cultural environment, which the non-Indian knows from his upbringing and experience. Parental involvement in this type of experience would make the learning more meaningful. As an example, parents should be invited to eat with the school children in small groups where they could assist with the teaching of table manners, proper use of knives and forks, and quiet conversation. Indian parents could attend school during the last hour of the day or on Friday afternoons where they could teach Indian beading and assist children with arts and crafts activities. Another example would be to have a few parents accompany students on field trips to places in South Dakota such as Corsica where Festival Tulip Days are held or to

Tabor to enjoy the Czech Days Celebration.

School Employment.

School service contracts for running school buses, office management, or for operating a school lunch program, should be funded as they are now but become an activity of the Indian people themselves rather than of employees of the federal government.

Tribes with sufficient funds could hire additional teachers for their children. Salaries for extra teachers paid with tribal funds might require some adjustment of regulations by the state or the local boards of education. Even the poorer tribes might make a token payment toward their children's education, thus giving those tribes an interest in the schools. The tribes could pay the salary of teachers needed to work extra hours, as the basketball coach. This would also involve the parent as it would be his money being used. Also it would be advisable to hire a parent in the community to coach basketball, track, or to assist in extra-curricular activities.

Parent Education.

A remedial program for adults rather than children is needed. Indian parents with little or no education themselves are unable to reinforce what their children learn at school. A sizeable number of parents can not read and comprehend their children's school reports. The

whole picture adds up to a lack of motivation for a large number of Indian children. It is a short step to the decision to involve adults as the key to unlock the child's aspirations. Indian parents involvement is needed but the best of all possible educational spurs to the young Indian will be parents who know how to read and write.[21]

In an Indian situation the school should provide coffee and cake as an added incentive. The values derived from parent study groups are worthwhile to everyone involved. For parents, it provides a better understanding of the school, greater peace of mind regarding the nature of the educational program, and greater confidence in carrying out parental responsibilities for the education of children. For the child, there seems to be a value derived from a recognition that Mother and Father are more interested in what they are doing at school and have a better understanding and appreciation of what is going on. Children's work often improves markedly as a result of parent participation in such study groups. For the teacher, values include a warmer relationship with parents, a feeling of oneness of purpose with the parental public.[22]

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[21]Richard Nixon, "A Brighter Indian Future", Indian Record, January 1969, pp. 5.

[22]Ben M. Harris, "Parents and Teachers Learn Together", Childhood Education, March 1958, pp. 324-325.

Indian Models.

Indian pupils can successfully be motivated by the inspiration provided by good models. The teacher needs to become acquainted with Indians who are good examples of success both on and off the reservations, learn who the people are who are most respected by other local Indians and then enlist their help in the school program. They may be willing to come to the school itself on occasion to talk with classes or select groups of pupils. They may be willing to unofficially counsel a particular student.

In contrast Negro children have models, where as the Indian child can't find models to identify with. Who am I? Who should I be? These are questions asked by the Indian student. Parents need to be involved in the school and serve as an example for the Indian child to look up to, respect, and model his life after. An example could be grandfather explaining the old Indian ways on the reservation.[23]

Home Support.

Most teachers feel that the Indian homes typically do little to assist the school in encouraging attendance and attention to schoolwork. In fact, they list the lack of home support as being the number one cause of school dropouts. Although this may indicate a shallow understanding

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[23]Dr. G. S. Masterok, University of Texas, Tele-Lecture to Northern State College, March 19, 1970.

of causes of behavior, it does hint at a lack of combined effort on the part of school and parent. Let us start with the assumption that it is logical for the school to take the initiative in improving the situation. It is unrealistic to expect that parents will do so.

Better communication must be established between school and parent. Various barriers may currently exist, such as the school personnel may not have any direct personal contact with Indian parents. A special type of individual seems to be required here, someone who is part of the school operation but who knows the Indian people and who can discuss matters with them in a way that carries meaning. Certain teachers, counselors, and administrators already may fit that description. The school needs to identify such people and to assign this function as part of their specific responsibilities.

Publicity Needed

Needed is an active advertising campaign to increase parental interest in the Indian schools. The Indian school administration needs to place large size advertisements to attract the parents' attention.

The schools need to become active in all local, county, and state competition in academic and recreational activities.

Very simply defined publicity is telling as many

people as possible about your program in such a way as to enlist their participation and support.[24]

To invite parental interest the school needs to do its share. Schools might well profit from the example of industry where advertising, informing the community of good labor relations, and emphasing their contributions to public welfare through research and services have proved universally beneficial. Just as modern business investors demand current reports and prognoses of future development, so too, the stockholders of the schools--all the people of the community--deserve similar enlightenment. Furthermore, only informed and satisfied stockholders will be boosters.[25]

Indian Culture.

Opening our eyes to cultural differences, one can find a wealth of beauty all around. The search for beauty in every culture must continue. Teachers should learn to make use of this richness and beauty in the classrooms to help children learn about themselves and the world of many cultures which they inhabit.[26]

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[24]James A. Baley, Public Relations, Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Vol 32, No. 8, November 1961. pp. 27-28.

[25]Doyle M. Bortner, Public Relations for Teachers, Simmons-Boardman Publishing Corporation; New York, 1959,pp.66.

[26]Charles Zellers, Zap, Address given at Northern Arizona University, June 3, 1968, pp. 7.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to determine why the Indian parent was not actively involved in the education of their children and to suggest methods of obtaining their participation in school activities. The study has importance in that lack of parental interest in the performance of their children has been considered a deterrent to Indian education.

Much of the blame for lack of involvement can be placed on the government who has forever vacillated, with typical bureaucratic cretinism, between extermination and assimilation, each of which has amounted to the systematic eradication of Indian self-respect. A most urgent need today is for school personnel to assist the Indian in his determination to judge life according to his own values, as well as to retain an Indian identity while participating in an industrial economy.

Throughout the 1960's, numerous studies, reports, and commissions have come forth with their "solutions" for the Indian problem. But the crucial ingredient that has always been missing is the concept that the Indian can speak for himself. At the Rough Rock Indian School in Chinle, Arizona, it was proven that self-determination was most effective. The Rough Rock School, the only Indian-controlled school in

the United States, is also the most innovative Indian school in the nation. It carries on extensive community and parental involvement in school affairs. The school has played a noteworthy role in the overall reform movement in Indian education. Beyond that, it has become a symbol of the value and indeed the absolute necessity of Indian parent involvement.

Through Indian parent involvement in local schools they will come to manage their own affairs and take an active and vigorous part in managing their own lives.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGING ATTITUDE

Change the teaching methods and classroom setting to accommodate the learning style of the Indian culture as follows: teach Sioux language, nature lore, moral values, and ceremonial rites; bring the Indian point of view into the classroom; adapt curricula and methods that apply to the Indian culture.

Enlist active participation in school operations and educational programs through public school district boards, advisory boards, education committees, and parent-teacher organizations.

Personnel in Bureau schools must realize that the Indians themselves have a persistent interest in their own improvement. Education must place all initiative in the Indian parents' hands and broaden the opportunity for continuous participation by Indians in shaping their own

destiny.

Invite parents to eat the noon meal with the children, accompany them on field trips, and help teach beading and arts and crafts in the school.

Make use of good Indian models in the school. Use personnel who have prestige on the reservations. This is good motivation for the pupils. Local tribes should hire Indian parents to work in the school as aides and coaches and to assist with extra-curricular activities.

Make provisions for active adult education. Indian parents with no background were unable to reinforce what their children learned at school. The parents need to know how to become involved in school affairs in an intelligent manner. School operations, the school's objectives and procedures need to be explained in detail.

Better communication should be established between the school and the parent. Communication must be established with the Indian parent and other relatives and tribal officials. In the communication, recognize the Indian views when expressed; be more responsive to their needs. Achieve school progress through Indian participation to reach goals they themselves have set. Communicate through school displays showing Indian artifacts and past history of the area. School libraries should include many books on American Indians. These books should be made available to parents,

community members, and students. Participation in any local publication should supply school news of interest to the community. If no papers are in the area, have students and parents help to establish a local publication. Use the paper to tell as many people as you can about school programs. Do this in such a way as to enlist parent participation and support.

Tribal Council minutes should be used in the upper grades in reading and social studies classes. Students should attend the meetings to obtain first hand information.

Perhaps once a week or at least once a month have the noon meal planned with Indian foods. This should involve parents in the community especially good at cooking specific Indian dishes. During other days meals should concentrate on Indian bread, corn bread, Indian pudding and other favorite foods of the children that are served at home.

In any school planning, Indian parents need to be involved at the outset. More constructive participation and ideas may result if a tape recorder is used in the meetings. School officials could introduce the program needed, then after activating the tape recorder leave the parents alone in the room.

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